

Message Text

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SUBJ: DR. CARL EDWARD SAGAN SPEAKS AT UN ON MARS EXPLORATION

OCT 18, 1976

1. SUMMARY: AFTER COMMITTEE I MEETING ON OUTER SPACE AFTERNOON OCT 18, PROFESSOR SAGAN OF CORNELL MADE HIGHLY ARTICULATE AND WELL-RECEIVED PRESENTATION ON OUTER-SPACE EXPLORATION WITH MAJOR EMPHASIS ON MARS AND VIKING PROGRAM. QUESTIONS DIRECTED AT SAGAN REVEALED KEEN INTEREST AMONG DELEGATES. IN SUBSEQUENT COMMENTS TO MISOFFS, SAGAN SAW UN AS VALUABLE FORUM FOR OUTER SPACE DISCUSSION. HE EMPHASIZED HIS CONCERN TO MISOFFS THAT VEHICLES DESTINED FOR MARS BE THOROUGHLY STERILIZED TO INSURE THEY BEAR NO LIVING ORGANISMS FROM EARTH WHICH COULD DEFEAT EXPERIMENTS TO DETERMINE PRESENT OR PAST EXISTENCE OF LIFE ON MARS. HE SUGGESTED THAT AN INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT ON STERILIZATION OF MARS VEHICLES WOULD BE MOST TIMELY AND IMPORTANT. END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING COMMITTEE I AFTERNOON MEETING ON OUTER SPACE OCT 18, PROFESSOR CARL EDWARD SAGAN OF CORNELL UNIVERSITY ADDRESSED UN DELEGATES ON OUTER-SPACE EXPLORATION WITH MAJOR
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EMPHASIS ON MARS AND VIKING PROGRAM.

3. AT CLOSE OF MORNING MEETING ON OUTER SPACE, COMMITTEE I CHAIRMAN JAROSZEK (POLAND) HAD ANNOUNCED OFFER OF US DEL TO HAVE SAGAN ADDRESS COMMITTEE FOLLOWING AFTERNOON MEETING. COMMITTEE ACCEPTED THIS OFFER WITHOUT DISCUSSION.

4. DURING AFTERNOON MEETING, AMB BENNETT IN DELIVERING US STATEMENT TO COMMITTEE, STRESSED SUCCESSFUL LANDINGS ON MARS BY VIKING LANDERS AND REEMPHASIZED THAT SAGAN WOULD BE PRESENTING SLIDE SHOWING WITH COMMENTARY AFTER MEETING. WORD GOT AROUND, AND THERE WAS AN IMPRESSIVE NUMBER IN CONFERENCE ROOM IV WHEN SAGAN BEGAN TO SPEAK.

5. KEENNESS OF INTEREST IN SAGAN'S THIRTY-MINUTE PRESENTATION WAS EMPHASIZED BY NUMEROUS QUESTIONS FROM DELEGATES AT CONCLUSION OF SLIDE-SHOWING. INDEED, QUESTION PERIOD LASTED THIRTY-FIVE MINUTES WITH QUESTIONS FLOWING FROM ASIAN, AFRICAN, EUROPEAN, AND LATIN AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVES.

6. SUBSEQUENT COMMENT ON SAGAN'S PRESENTATION HAD BEEN HIGHLY FAVORABLE. CHAIRMAN JAROSZEK HAS VOLUNTEERED THAT BOTH CONTENT AND PRESENTATION OF SAGAN'S LECTURE WERE OUTSTANDING AND REPRESENTED VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TO COMMITTEE'S WORK. ADDITIONALLY, MONGOLIA'S AMB PUNTSAGNOROV, FOR INSTANCE, HAS EXPRESSED HIGH PRAISE. A DOZEN OR MORE DELEGATES LINED UP TO CONGRATULATE SAGAN AFTER HIS LECTURE. UNIDENTIFIED USSR ADVISER ENTHUSIASTICALLY THANKED SAGAN FOR HIS REFERENCE TO SOVIET VENUS SHOTS.

7. SAGAN WAS IMPRESSED WITH UN AS A FORUM FOR CONSIDERATION OF OUTER SPACE QUESTIONS. HE ALSO EMPHASIZED TO MISOFFS HIS CONCERN THAT VEHICLES DESTINED FOR MARS BE THOROUGHLY STERILIZED BEFORE DEPARTURE FROM EARTH. HE UNDERLINED THAT TRANSFER OF ANY LIVING ORGANISMS FROM EARTH TO MARS COULD DEFEAT THE GOAL OF TRYING TO LEARN WHETHER THERE IS OR HAS BEEN LIFE ON MARS. SAGAN STRESSED LACK OF INFORMATION ABOUT SOVIET SPACE VEHICLE STERILIZATION MEASURES. HE SUGGESTED THAT AN INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT ON STERILIZATION OF SPACE VEHICLES, ESPECIALLY THOSE DESTINED FOR MARS, WOULD BE MOST TIMELY AND IMPORTANT.

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8. IN HIS LECTURE, SAGAN UNDERLINED POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF MARS EXPLORATION AND STUDY OF DEVELOPING UNDERSTANDING OF PROBLEMS FACING THE EARTH'S ENVIRONMENTALISTS IN THEIR EFFORTS TO PROTECT OUR UNIQUELY HOSPITABLE AND BEAUTIFUL PLANET. DURING HIS PRESENTATION, SAGAN GAVE DUE, EVEN GENEROUS, CREDIT TO SOVIET EFFORTS IN SPACE.
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